2017 Summer Reading
Dear Students and Parents,

As the American poet Emily Dickinson reminds us, “There is no frigate like a book / To take us lands away.” It is in this spirit that we encourage students – and their parents – to take imaginative excursions aboard some of the wonderful “frigates” described in this summer reading guide.

We are well aware that students are busy with a number of meaningful activities during the summer months, so we have developed summer reading expectations that keep our students connected to books while leaving plenty of time for other pursuits. Students must read a minimum of three books over the summer. The first is the required book for the English Department; the other two can be selected from any of the departmental lists in this document.* Students should feel free to pick their second and third titles based on personal interest, and they are welcome to read books either in hard copy or in electronic format. We encourage students to read more than three books during the summer, whether they select titles from the accompanying list or choose books on their own.

We have grouped the choices by discipline and have indicated the level of difficulty or age appropriateness when warranted. Faculty members from each department have made these recommendations, and we have tried to achieve a balance between classic and contemporary texts. The write-ups have generally been penned by the faculty, though we have borrowed descriptions from Amazon and other publications on occasion.

As in the past, English teachers will assess students’ reading of the required text with a writing assignment or quiz during the first week of classes. Students will also take a survey during the first week of school to indicate which additional titles they have read. They should expect to have follow-up discussions early in the fall with their advisers about their summer reading.

We strongly encourage students to read beyond the minimum requirements, and we hope that many parents will choose to read alongside their children this summer, thus providing wonderful opportunities for a shared experience and meaningful discussion.

Thank you for making reading a part of your summer. Bon voyage!

Sincerely,
The Academic Department Heads

Kalya Yannatos, Arts
Ellen Devine, English
Amy Foster, History, Philosophy, Religion, and Social Sciences
Diana Beste, Languages
Matthew Bardoe, Mathematics and Computer Science
Ben Small, Science

*Additional and Alternate Readings:
- Students taking United States History, Honors or American Studies (HI355HO or HI375HO) have an additional required text (see Additional Required Texts for Specialized Courses).
- Students participating in the Environmental Immersion Program at the Kohler Environmental Center have their own summer reading list, included at the end of this document.
Required Summer Reading for English

In order to encourage our students to cultivate an appreciation of literature, as well as to expose them to contemporary writers, each summer the English Department features a new text or texts written by a living author. In the following academic year, that author visits campus, attends classes, and speaks to the student body so that our community may engage with the assigned text in a new and dynamic manner. The text for the summer of 2017 is The Book of Unknown Americans by Christina Henriquez. This is the assigned text for all students in all forms. A brief description of the text is available below. All students will be assessed on the summer reading during the fall term.

*The Book of Unknown Americans* by Christina Henriquez
When fifteen-year-old Maribel Rivera sustains a terrible injury, the Riveras leave behind a comfortable life in Mexico and risk everything to come to the United States so that Maribel can have the care she needs. Once they arrive, it’s not long before Maribel attracts the attention of Mayor Toro, the son of one of their new neighbors, who sees a kindred spirit in this beautiful, damaged outsider. Their love story sets in motion events that will have profound repercussions for everyone involved. Here Henriquez seamlessly interweaves the story of these star-crossed lovers, and of the Rivera and Toro families, with the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America. The Book of Unknown Americans is a stunning novel of hopes and dreams, guilt and love—a book that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American.

Additional Required Texts for Specialized Courses

HI355HO (United States History, Honors) or HI375HO (American Studies)
*The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead
This powerful, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel tell the story of Cora, a slave who escapes a cotton plantation in Georgia. The author imagines the “underground railroad” as a literal network of hidden trains as he chronicles the challenges Cora faces in her harrowing quest for true freedom.
Reading in the Arts

*An Whole New Mind, Daniel Pink.*
A plug for why society will need many more creative “right-brained” thinkers.

**Visual Arts**

*Art and Physics, Leonard Shlain*
Leonard Shlain proposes that the visionary artist is the first member of a culture to see the world in a new way. Then, nearly simultaneously, a revolutionary physicist discovers a new way to think about the world. Escorting the reader through the classical, medieval, Renaissance and modern eras, Shlain shows how the artists’ images when superimposed on the physicists’ concepts create a compelling fit.

*Andy Warhol Diaries, Andy Warhol*
The artist reflects on his life, creative thinking, and his interactions with movie stars, rock stars, designers, artists, and the who’s who of his time. An insider’s view of the art world.

*The Transformation of the Commonplace, Arthur Danto*
“Danto proposes art as a metaphor of the commonplace. Art makes obvious things odd; it paradoxicalizes the ordinary. It defamiliarizes.”

*Letters of Vincent Van Gogh to His Brother Theo, Vincent Van Gogh*
An interesting selection of Vincent Van Gogh’s letters to his younger brother, Theo. He depended upon his brother for money and moral support and these letters reveal his total trust in the unconditional love of his brother. The letters are surprising in their frankness and vulnerability. This is a special opportunity to understand the inner thoughts of a true artistic genius.

*An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales, Oliver Sacks*
How we see in color and pictures.

*Discoveries: Leonardo da Vinci, Alessandro Vezzosi*
A convenient but complete biography. Very thorough and very readable.

*Discoveries: Rembrandt, Pascal Bonafoux*
A small art book filled with interesting facts about the complicated life of one of the greatest artists who ever lived. His financial and family struggles are described at the same time as his great artistic achievements. It is a complete biography in a small colorful package.

*The Moon and Sixpence, W. Somerset Maugham*
A novel that explores how an artist thinks—or how a writer thinks an artist thinks.
Music

Silence, John Cage
Meditations and compositions by avant-garde 20th century composer for reflection and performance.

Stand Up Straight and Sing, Jessye Norman
Jessye Norman is not only one of the world’s most admired and beloved singers, she is an American icon whose life story is as moving and dramatic as the great operatic roles she has performed on stage.

The Inner Game of Music, Barry Green with W. Timothy Gallwey
A good book for students who know that they will be performing in front of an audience as it explains how to free oneself from inner obstacles that inhibit true performance and free artistic expression.

Musicophilia, Oliver Sacks
Music occupies more areas of our brain than language does. Explores how humans are a musical species.

This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of Human Obsession, Daniel Levitan
Why do humans create and enjoy music? Answer: evolution, anatomy, perception, computation, critical thinking, creativity.

Joys & Sorrows, Pablo Casals
Autobiography and poignant memoirs by a great musician and humanitarian.

The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures), Leonard Bernstein
The great American composer and conductor discusses the universality of musical language through wide-ranging analogies to linguistics, aesthetic philosophy, and acoustics as well as music history. These six talks give new meaning to the word “erudite”!

And the Bridge is Love, Alma Mahler Werfel
Alma Mahler Werfel’s reminiscences of her marriages to Gustav Mahler, composer; Walter Gropius, architect, and founder of the Bauhaus School; and Franz Werfel, novelist.

Letters of Mozart and His Family, Emily Anderson, editor
An intimate look into the life and mind of one of the world’s greatest geniuses.

Deep Blues: A Musical and Cultural History of the Mississippi Delta, Robert Palmer
Palmer traces the odyssey of the blues from its rural beginnings to its international popularity.

Why Sinatra Matters, Pete Hamill
A novelist’s personal and passionate take on the great American popular singer’s art.

Chronicles: Volume One, Bob Dylan
The first volume of the singer/songwriter’s autobiography explores his early life and influences and his emergence as an artist in the vibrant folk scene in Greenwich Village in the early 1960s.
Theater

An Actor Prepares, C. Stanislavski
Stanislavski’s simple exercises fire the imagination, and help readers not only discover their own conception of reality but how to reproduce it as well.

My Life in Art, C. Stanislavski
“Love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art.” An autobiography of one of the world’s most influential theatrical artists, offering a fascinating portrait of the history of modern acting and the development of the Moscow Arts Theatre.

The Path of the Actor, Michael Chekhov
Full of illuminating anecdotes and insightful observations involving prominent characters from the MAT and the European theater of the early 20th century, Chekhov takes us through events in his acting career and personal life, from his childhood in St. Petersburg until his emigration to Latvia and Lithuania in the early 1930s.

The Empty Space, Peter Brook
Groundbreaking director Peter Brook draws on a life in love with the stage to explore the issues facing any theatrical performance. Here he describes important developments in theater from the last century, as well as smaller scale events, from productions by Stanislavski to the rise of Method Acting, from Brecht’s revolutionary alienation technique to the free form Happenings of the 1960s, and from the different styles of such great Shakespearean actors as John Gielgud and Paul Scofield to a joyous impromptu performance in the burnt-out shell of the Hamburg Opera just after the war. Passionate, unconventional, and fascinating, this book shows how theater defies rules, builds and shatters illusions and creates lasting memories for its audiences.

On Directing, Harold Clurman
“A straightforward, tasteful, and articulate account of what it is to bring a play to palpitating life upon a stage” (The New York Times Book Review).

Towards a Poor Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski
As a record of Grotowski’s theatrical experiments, this book is an invaluable resource to students and theater practitioners alike.

Edward Albee: Singular Journey, Mel Gussow
The critically-acclaimed biography of the three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and Choate alumnus, Edward Albee Class of ’46.

History of the Theatre, Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy
Known as the “bible” of theater history, Brockett and Hildy’s History of the Theatre is the most comprehensive and widely used survey of theater history in the market.

Stanislavsky On the Art of the Stage, David Magarshack
A must-read for all acting students. An analysis of “method acting.”

Chekhov, Henri Troyat
“A superb, intimate portrait of Russia’s greatest playwright.”
On the Technique of Acting, Michael Chekhov
Michael Chekhov, nephew to the Russian playwright and protégée of Stanislavski, fled Russia in search of artistic freedom during the onset of the revolution. Once thought to be Stanislavski’s most likely replacement as Artistic Director of the Moscow Arts Theatre, Chekhov went on to develop his own process, which uses the actor’s imagination and body, instead of his intellect and emotional memory, to creating a role.

Dance
The Dance Experience, Insights into History, Culture, and Creativity, Myron Howard Nadel and Marc Raymond Strauss, Editors/Authors
Provides an understanding of the history, evolution, and universality of dance, it explores the significance of dance in culture, its relationship to other art forms, and the creative process.

Vision of Modern Dance in the Words of Its Creators, Edited by Jean Morrison Brown, Naomi Mindlin and Charles H. Woodford
This wonderful collection directly illuminates the history of modern dance as it is today, through the words of those who shaped it.

The Art of Making Dances, Doris Humphrey
The first and perhaps most important book on choreography ever written.

Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance, Jennifer Dunning
A biography of one of the dance world’s giants.

Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina, Misty Copeland
“As the only African American soloist dancing with the prestigious American Ballet Theatre, Misty Copeland has made history. But when she first placed her hands on the barre at an after-school community center, no one expected the undersized, anxious thirteen-year-old to become a ground-breaking ballerina.”

The Place of Dance: A Somatic Guide to Dancing, Andrea Olsen & Caryn McHose
For both the dancer and general reader, this book reminds us that dancing is our nature, available for all as well as refined for stage.
Readings in English

Recommended for third and fourth form students:

*I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou
The lyrical autobiography of the black writer’s early years in the segregated South.

*Dawn*, Octavia Butler
This is the first book in the trilogy, *Lilith’s Brood*, which is set in the future when the human race has nearly destroyed itself by nuclear war. The few humans who survive the war are rescued and captured by the Oankali, an alien species that is traveling through the universe seeking species with whom to share their genes. Lilith, a human woman, is adopted by an Oankali family who want her to help recruit other humans.

*My Antonia*, Willa Cather
The story of a Bohemian girl who returns to the land of her heritage—the prairies of Nebraska—after a trying interval in the city.

*The Red Tent*, Anita Diamant
This novel tells the story of Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, and her journey to womanhood. Through the telling of her story, the Jewish Bible comes alive in a new and exciting way as we learn about and understand the lives of the women of antiquity.

*Ella Minnow Pea*, Mark Dunn
A dark comedy in which a young girl living on an island off the coast of South Carolina finds herself fighting for the freedom of expression as the island’s town council attempts to ban the use of certain letters of the alphabet.

*A Prayer for Owen Meany*, John Irving
A comic story of a rebellious high school student—his friendships, his loves, his politics.

*The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd
Lily Owens’s life has been shaped by the blurred memory of the day her mother was killed. When Lily’s fierce-hearted “stand-in mother,” Rosaleen, insults three of the town’s fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape and seek the secret of her mother’s past. On their journey, they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, the Black Madonna, and the power of relationships to transform lives.

*Barabbas*, Par Lagerkvist
A fictional exploration of the life of the prisoner who was released by Pontius Pilate at the time of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion.

*Cat’s Cradle*, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
A satirical commentary on modern man and his madness, this apocalyptic tale of the planet’s ultimate fate features a cast of unlikely heroes.
The Once and Future King, T. H. White
A classic novel about the court of King Arthur, this epic fantasy is filled with talking beasts, flying men, knights, magic, war, and passion.

This Boy’s Life, Tobias Wolff
An amusing memoir of the author’s experiences growing up in a troubled family in the 1950s.

Recommended for fifth and sixth form students
Note: The titles below are grouped by upper-form course as a general indication of cultural origin or thematic kinship. Students who wish to select books that will relate most closely to their fall English class can use these groupings as a guide, but they should feel free to pick books that interest them from any of the lists below.

American Literature:
Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
A tale of a young Nigerian woman, Ifemelu, who immigrates to the United States to attend college. During her time in the United States, her education expands far beyond the classes she takes at the university. Her observations and questions about conceptions of race lead her to compose a blog about her experiences both in the U.S. and in Nigeria. In her blog, Ifemelu documents her struggles in school, her search for employment, the path of her romantic relationships, and everything that makes up one’s life.

March, Geraldine Brooks
Mr. March, the absent father in Alcott’s famous Little Women, is the central character in this beautiful work of historical fiction about the Civil War. March is a Union chaplain who witnesses the intimate horrors and ironies of the war during his travels. He attempts to send cheerful letters home throughout his journey, but the longer he is absent, the more his experiences transform both him and his narrative.

Kindred, Octavia E. Butler
Dana, a 26-year-old black woman in a mixed-race marriage, is mysteriously transported back in time from 1970s California to the antebellum South, where she saves Rufus, the son of a plantation owner. After this first summons, Dana is drawn back, again and again, to the plantation to protect Rufus and ensure that he will grow to manhood and father the daughter who will become Dana’s ancestor.

A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain, Robert Olen Butler
The Vietnam War continues to play itself out in fiction, autobiography, and history books, but few American authors have explored the war from the perspective of the Vietnamese themselves, as Butler does in this book, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993. The 15 stories collected here, all written in the first person, blend Vietnamese folklore, the terrible, lingering memories of war, American pop culture, and family drama.

Water for Elephants, Sara Gruen
When Jacob Jankowski, recently orphaned and suddenly adrift, jumps onto a passing train, he enters a world of freaks, grifters, and misfits, a second-rate circus struggling to survive during the Great Depression, making one-night stands in town after endless town. A veterinary student who almost earned his degree, Jacob is put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It is there that he meets Marlena, the beautiful young star of the equestrian act, who is married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. He also meets Rosie, an elephant who seems
untrainable until he discovers a way to reach her. Illuminated by a wonderful sense of time and place, the book tells an engaging story of love against the odds.

_Catch-22_, Joseph Heller
Yossarian doesn’t want to fly any more war missions, but he faces a problem: according to military rules, if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, he is insane; if he makes a formal request to be relieved of such missions, that very act proves that he is sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved. Hence the term that this novel introduced to our language: Catch-22. This classic American text looks at war with utter seriousness and bitter humor, showing us the world as it might look to someone dangerously sane.

_Middle Passage_, Charles Johnson
The year is 1830. Rutherford Calhoun—freed slave, ardent womanizer, and self-confessed liar and thief—flees New Orleans to avoid bad debts and relational commitment. His means of escape? A slave ship en route to pick up human cargo in Africa. The ship’s captain lives on the border between genius and madness, the crew are irreverent sea-faring scum, and the slaves eventually packed into the hold are members of an ancient tribe of magicians. This extraordinary voyage illuminates human character and society while telling a spell-binding adventure story.

_Random Family_, Adrian Nicole LeBlanc
Though it reads like a novel, this book is in fact a nonfiction work stemming from 10 years of research on one extended family in the Bronx. The characters navigate teen pregnancy, drug culture, public housing, emergency rooms, prisons, and courtrooms. LeBlanc’s close listening allows the subjects’ points-of-view to come through and show how demanding poverty is: An unvarnished and unsentimental portrait of people living in deep urban poverty, beyond the statistics, hip-hop glamour, and stereotypes.

_The Things They Carried_, Tim O’Brien
A collection of linked short stories—about both the war-torn jungles of Vietnam and the moral confusion back home in America—that captures the heart as well as the horror of the American experience in Vietnam.

_The Help_, Kathryn Stockett
Set in 1962 in Jackson, Mississippi, this novel portrays the relationships between white women and their black maids during an era of segregation and racial upheaval.

_Olive Kitteridge_, Elizabeth Strout
These thirteen-linked tales from Strout present a heart-wrenching, penetrating portrait of ordinary coastal Mainers living quiet lives filled with all of the grand human drama—desire, despair, jealousy, hope, and love. At times stern, at other times patient, at times perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplores the changes in her little town and in the world at large, but she doesn’t always recognize the changes in those around her. A deeply human book full of great characters.

_The Joy Luck Club_, Amy Tan
A series of inter-related stories that explore the tensions between Chinese immigrants and their first-generation American children.
**Welcome to the Monkey House**, Kurt Vonnegut  
Memorable characters, pitch-perfect dialogue, fantastic realities, and lots of satire and humor make this collection of Vonnegut stories a popular one. Some of the stories are science fiction and others take the Cold War as their backdrop; together they make a classic collection.

**The Glass Castle**, Jeannette Walls  
In this memoir, Walls chronicles her upbringing by eccentric and nomadic parents. Despite the many hardships and unexpected circumstances she endures in her youth, she manages to tell her story with good humor and love, creating an engaging account from start to finish.

**All the King’s Men**, Robert Penn Warren  
Politics, power, moral dilemmas—these are themes of Robert Penn Warren’s novel. Set in the 1930s, the novel traces the rise and fall of demagogue Willie Stark, a fictional character resembling the radical populist governor, Huey Long of Louisiana, assassinated in 1935. Beginning his political career as a champion of the people, Stark becomes corrupted by success, caught between a desire to serve the poor and a lust to achieve power.

**British Literature:**  
**Lucky Jim**, Kingsley Amis  
If you liked *Decline and Fall*, try this novel, a similarly witty look at British intellectual life. Jim Dixon has accidentally fallen into a job at one of Britain’s red-brick universities, and he may be able to secure a moderately successful future if only he can navigate the challenges presented by bosses, colleagues, students, and potential love interests. A classic comic novel and seminal campus novel.

**Pride and Prejudice**, Jane Austen  
Set in provincial 18th century England, a story of the often stormy relationship between the intelligent, spirited Elizabeth Bennet and the proud and wealthy man against whom she is prejudiced from their first meeting.

**A Star Called Henry**, Roddy Doyle  
A gripping adventure story about a young man who gets caught up in the Irish Rebellion only to learn that politicians on both sides of the issue are liars who use people for their own ends.

**Birth of Venus**, Sarah Dunant  
This novel tells a fascinating story—set in Florence during the Renaissance—of love, art, religion, and power through the voice Alessandra Cecchi who is not quite 15 years old when her father, a prosperous cloth merchant, brings a young painter from northern Europe to decorate the chapel walls in the family’s palazzo. With her own talent for drawing, Alessandra is enthralled by the painter’s abilities. Their relationship is interrupted when Alessandra’s parents arrange her marriage to a wealthy, much older man. Alessandra’s life plays out against the turbulent backdrop of a city caught between the Medici state, with its love of luxury, learning, and art, and the rising power of Savonarola, a fundamentalist monk, and his followers. Alessandra emerges a heroine whose spirit matches that of her beloved city.

**The Collector**, John Fowles  
The story of the abduction and imprisonment of the beautiful and artistic Miranda Grey by Frederick Clegg, a thwarted and self-deluded clerk who suddenly wins the lottery and buys himself a secluded estate with a secret room deep in its cellar. Though by turns psychologically gruesome and exhilarating, this is no *Silence of the Lambs*. 
The story is about two people challenged to struggle toward a fuller life. Fowles manages a compelling plot even as he gives us two very human characters trapped by external and internal barriers. Success and failure are turned upside down, along with just about everything else.

*Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage*, Alfred Lansing
The astonishing saga of polar explorer Ernest Shackleton’s survival for over a year on the ice-bound Antarctic seas is, as one reviewer put it, “heroism defined.” Lansing’s scrupulously researched book has long been acknowledged as the definitive account of the *Endurance’s* fateful trip. Because Lansing consulted with 10 surviving members of the expedition and gained access to diaries and personal accounts by eight others, the book has all the immediacy of a first-hand account, expanded with maps and illustrations.

*Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro
Hailsham is an elite boarding school in the English countryside, and the students there know that they are special. But it is only through rumor and occasional fleeting remarks that they learn exactly how and why they are special in this beautifully written novel of adolescence, identity, and society.

*Saturday*, Ian McEwan
An upper-middle class, liberal London surgeon finds himself and his family threatened by terrorists and thugs in the wake of 9/11.

**Classical Tradition:**

*The Golden Ass*, Apuleius
This ancient work chronicles the travels of Lucius, a wealthy young man eager for adventure and lusty encounters.

*Sailing the Wine Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter*, Thomas Cahill
Cahill’s fascinating, readable, and entertaining account of the considerable influence of ancient Greek culture and thought is a perfect introduction to The Classical Tradition. This book provides background for many of the authors and historical figures which will be encountered in the course.

*Mythology*, Edith Hamilton
A classic retelling of the myths of ancient Greece and Rome.

*Tales from Ovid*, Ted Hughes (translator)
Ovid, a Roman poet, retells many Greek myths in his *Metamorphoses*, a series of poems about the passions and adventures of notable men, women, and gods. In his telling of the ancient tales, Hughes translates a selection of the more disturbing stories.

*Till We Have Faces*, C. S. Lewis
A retelling of the Greek legend of the beautiful mortal woman Psyche and her divine lover, Cupid. Set in the fictional kingdom of Glome, the story unfolds from the viewpoint of Psyche’s ugly and jealous older sister Orual. Orual asks readers to judge between her and the gods to decide who is in the right. The title refers to one of Orual’s questions: “How can we meet the gods until we have (our own) faces?”
Comparative Literature:

*Inés of My Soul*, Isabel Allende
A work of historical fiction, Allende’s novel recounts the life of Inés Suárez, a daring Spanish conquistadora who toiled to build the nation of Chile. Inés flees her stifling homeland and seeks adventure—plenty of which she finds in both a passionate love affair and war—after her shiftless husband disappears to the New World. Inés and her lover’s horrific struggle with the indigenous Chileans changes them forever, taking them toward their separate destinies.

*Genesis*, Bernard Beckett
In this futuristic tale, plague has decimated the world and only one island nation remains free from contamination. Anax, a young historian, is undergoing an examination to become a member of the Academy, the nation’s ruling body. This short but gripping tale, full of echoes of Orwell and Huxley, will keep you on the edge of your seat while examining big issues like the nature of consciousness and what gives human life worth.

*The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri
This novel about the pains of the immigrant experience charts the Ganguli family’s journey from their traditional life in India to modern America.

*The Lowlands*, Jhumpa Lahiri
This epic and gorgeously written novel details the lives of two brothers who are incredibly close but could not be more different. As one pursues the life of a scholar, the other becomes a radical who works to overthrow an oppressive regime. In a story that spans two oceans and a handful of decades, the brothers’ paths diverge significantly, but their lives remain inextricably linked.

*A Gesture Life*, Chang-Rae Lee
Lee’s novel chronicles the life of Franklin Hata, a native-born Korean raised by Japanese parents who, after serving in Japan’s Imperial Army, emigrates to the United States where he owns a suburban medical supply business. Presented in two different time frames, the novel shifts from flashbacks that detail Hata’s chillingly harsh experiences as a medical officer stationed in rural Burma to the present day, where he struggles to mend his relationship with Sunny, his estranged adopted daughter.

*Love in the Time of Cholera*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
An absorbing story set in a country on the Caribbean coast of South America about an unrequited passion so strong that it binds three people’s lives together for more than 50 years.

*The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, David Wroblewski
This is the tale of a young man born mute who leads a nearly ideal life with his family on their farm in rural northern Wisconsin where they raise and train a fictional (and very special) breed of dog. Edgar’s idyllic family life is shattered by the arrival of his uncle whose presence—coupled with Edgar’s father’s sudden and mysterious death—leaves Edgar and his life in turmoil and sends him and his beloved dogs on a dangerous journey. Beautifully written and thoughtfully conceived, this is a truly remarkable novel. You will not be able to put it down.
Literature written by Choate Alumni:
Choate Rosemary Hall has a rich history of producing talented writers of fiction and non-fiction. In honor of our strong literary tradition, we have included a small sampling of the works written by some of our notable alumni authors.

*My Paris Dream*, Kate Betts ’82
Kate Betts’s captivating memoir brings to life the enchantment of France—from the nightclubs of 1980s Paris where she learned to dance Le Rock, to the lavender fields of Provence and the grand spectacle of the Cour Carrée—and magically re-creates that moment in life when a young woman discovers who she’s meant to be.

*A Dual Inheritance*, Joanna Hershon ’90
Autumn 1962: Ed Cantowitz and Hugh Shipley meet in their final year at Harvard. Ed is far removed from Hugh’s privileged upbringing as a Boston Brahmin, yet his drive and ambition outpace Hugh’s ambivalence about his own life. These two young men form an unlikely friendship, bolstered by a fierce shared desire to transcend their circumstance. Can a friendship define your view of the world? Spanning from the Cuban Missile Crisis to the present-day stock market collapse, with locations as diverse as Dar es Salaam, Boston, Shenzhen, and Fishers Island, *A Dual Inheritance* asks this question, as it follows not only these two men, but the complicated women in their vastly different lives. And as Ed and Hugh grow farther and farther apart, they remain uniquely—even surprisingly—connected.

*My Notorious Life*, Kate Manning ’75
Meet the incomparable Axlie Muldoon. Axlie’s story begins on the streets of 1860s New York. The impoverished child of Irish immigrants, she grows up to become one of the wealthiest and most controversial women of her day. In vivid prose, Axlie recounts how she is forcibly separated from her mother and siblings, apprenticed to a doctor, and how she and her husband parlay the sale of a few bottles of “Lunar Tablets for Female Complaint” into a thriving midwifery business.

*Reservation Road*, John Burnham Schwartz ’83
A tragic accident sets in motion a cycle of violence and retribution in John Burnham Schwartz’s riveting novel *Reservation Road*. Two haunted men and their families are engulfed by the emotions surrounding an unexpected and horrendous death. Ethan, a respected professor of literature at a small New England college, is wracked by an obsession with revenge that threatens to tear his family apart. Dwight, a man at once fleeing his crime and hoping to get caught, wrestles with overwhelming guilt and his sense of obligation to his son. As these two men’s lives unravel, *Reservation Road* moves to its startling conclusion. This is an astonishing tale of love and loss, rage and redemption, that is as suspenseful as it is emotionally compelling.

*Where’d You Go*, Bernadette Maria Semple ’82
Bernadette Fox is notorious. To her Microsoft-guru husband, she’s a fearlessly opinionated partner; to fellow private-school mothers in Seattle, she’s a disgrace; to design mavens, she’s a revolutionary architect; and to 15-year-old Bee, she is a best friend and, simply, Mom. Then Bernadette disappears. It began when Bee aced her report card and claimed her promised reward: a family trip to Antarctica. But Bernadette’s intensifying allergy to Seattle—and people in general—has made her so agoraphobic that a virtual assistant in India now runs her most basic errands. A trip to the end of the earth is problematic. To find her mother, Bee compiles email messages, official documents, secret correspondence—creating a compulsively readable and touching novel about misplaced genius and a mother and daughter’s role in an absurd world.
A Short History of Women, Kate Walbert ’79
A profoundly moving portrait of the complicated legacies of mothers and daughters, A Short History of Women chronicles five generations of women from the close of the 19th century through the early years of the 21st. Beginning in 1914 at the deathbed of Dorothy Trevor Townsend, a suffragette who starves herself for the cause, the novel traces the echoes of her choice in the stories of her descendants—a brilliant daughter who tries to escape the burden of her mother’s infamy; a granddaughter who chooses a conventional path, only to find herself disillusioned; a great-granddaughter who wryly articulates the free-floating anxiety of post-9/11 Manhattan. In a kaleidoscope of characters and with a richness of imagery, emotion, and wit, A Short History of Women is a thought-provoking and vividly original narrative that crisscrosses a century.

The Duke of Deception, Geoffrey Wolff ’55
Duke Wolff was a flawless specimen of the American clubman—a product of Yale and the OSS, a one-time fighter pilot turned aviation engineer. Duke Wolff was a failure who flunked out of a series of undistinguished schools, was passed up for military service, and supported himself with desperately improvised scams, exploiting employers, wives, and, finally, his own son. In The Duke of Deception, Geoffrey Wolff unravels the enigma of this Gatsbyesque figure, a bad man who somehow was also a very good father, an inveterate liar who falsified everything but love.
Readings in History, Philosophy, Religion and Social Sciences

History
200 Level:
1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created, Charles C. Mann
Using research from history, biology, anthropology and archeology, Mann creates a history of how European settlements in the post-Colombian Americas affected the world, from China to Africa as well as Europe and the Americas.

Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire, Jason Goodwin
The book explores the rise and longevity of the Ottoman Empire before its ultimate decline. Goodwin also examines the ongoing issues in today’s world related to the legacy of the Ottomans.

The Columbian Exchange, Alfred Crosby
The book explores the Spanish conquest in America and how certain symbols which we still hold today were synthesized from Old and New World cultures. He explores the migration, populations, animals and crops in the Americas also.

Empire of Cotton: A Global History, Sven Beckert
This engaging book traces the emergence of modern capitalism through the story of the global cotton industry.

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Jared Diamond
This book by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author examines a variety of examples in pursuit of an answer to this question: How can our world best avoid committing ecological suicide? Diamond examines the effects of climate change, population growth, and political discord as he explores how societies have and will be able to succeed.

Wallenberg: Missing Hero, Kati Marton
The story of Raoul Wallenberg, who heroically saved over 100,000 Jews from Nazi death camps before mysteriously disappearing into Soviet prisons.

Daughter of Han, Ning Lao Tai-Tai
Ning Lao Tai-Tai, born in the seventh year of T’ung Chih, 1867, lived a full and difficult life; she bore and buried children, worked as a maidservant, begged for food, and felt pride in her old age by sharing a home with her son and his family. A lively, driven woman who wants only to provide for her family, often without the support of her opium-addicted husband, Ning Lao wonders how life would have been different with a formal education: “I might have been somebody in the world.” When her husband sells their kitchenware, she gets it back; when he sells their daughters, she gets them back—and then must give one up because she’s unable to feed her.

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini
Hosseini’s stunning debut novel starts as an eloquent Afghan version of the American immigrant experience in the late 20th century, but betrayal and redemption come to the forefront when the narrator, a writer, returns to his ravaged homeland to rescue the son of his childhood friend after the boy’s parents are shot during the Taliban takeover in the mid ’90s.
In 1995, after resigning from her job as a professor at a university in Tehran due to repressive policies, Azar Nafisi invited seven of her best female students to attend a weekly study of great Western literature in her home. Since the books they read were officially banned by the government, the women were forced to meet in secret, often sharing photocopied pages of the illegal novels. (Dr. Nafisi was the featured speaker for the 2010 Thalheimer Educator-in-Residence Program at Choate.)

The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History, Joanna Waley-Cohen
The book examines the history of China from the rise of the Silk Road to the present day, with special attention to the many interactions between China and other cultures.

300, 400, and 500 Levels:
Founding Brothers, Joseph Ellis
In retrospect, it seems as if the American Revolution was inevitable. But was it? In Founding Brothers, Joseph J. Ellis reveals that many of those truths we hold to be self-evident were actually fiercely contested in the early days of the republic.

The Looming Tower, Lawrence Wright
Wright, a New Yorker writer, brings exhaustive research and delightful prose to one of the best books yet on the history of terrorism.

State of Denial, Bob Woodward
In the third volume exploring the political carnage and bureaucratic infighting prompted by the September 11 attacks, legendary investigative journalist Woodward (Bush at War, Plan of Attack) dissects the Bush administration’s conduct of the war in Iraq. (Mr. Woodward was the featured speaker for the 2015 Thalheimer Educator-in-Residence Program at Choate.)

The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon
Written during the Algerian struggle for independence from French colonial rule, this book examines colonialism from the perspective of the colonized. Fanon examines the psychology of the colonized and their path to liberation.

The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation, 2nd edition, Leo Chavez
Chavez provides facts and stories about immigrants that challenge the common portrayal in the media of Latino immigrants as threats. In exploring topics such as the DREAM Act, anchor babies, and more, the book explores what it means to be an American.

Killer Angels, Michael Shaara
This novel reveals more about the Battle of Gettysburg than any piece of learned nonfiction on the same subject. Michael Shaara’s account of the three most important days of the Civil War features deft characterizations of all of the main actors, including Lee, Longstreet, Pickett, Buford, and Hancock.

1776, David McCullough
The book places a magnifying glass over the year 1776, which shaped the path for American independence. He provides an interesting view of both the American and British perspective during this tumultuous time period, which all U.S. history students will study during the fall term.
Team of Rivals, Doris Kearns Goodwin
This group biography of Lincoln and the leading members of his cabinet traces the lives of these leaders from the beginning of the 19th century through the Civil War. The various accounts of their lives offer a unique perspective on America before, during and after the Civil War, with an insider’s look at the decisions made in the White House and in Washington. An excellent book for both students of American history and American politics.

Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the Civil War, Drew Gilpin Faust
Faust makes a major contribution to both Civil War historiography and women’s studies in this outstanding analysis of the impact of secession, invasion and conquest on Southern white women.

The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme, John Keegan
What is it like to be in battle? John Keegan, a senior instructor at Sandhurst, the British Military Academy, speaks for soldiers who were present in the fray.

War and Peace in the Middle East, Avi Shlaim
Shlaim offers cogent insights on key issues and, without being coy, recommends a course of action that calls for more U.S. involvement in the peace process. Breathhtaking in its scope and historical precision, this is a highly recommended volume for both public and academic libraries.

Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China, Evan Osnos
Evan Osnos, a staff writer for the New Yorker, has written this award-winning book about the dramatic changes in China over the past 35 years, portraying this time period as China’s “Gilded Age.”

Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War, Karl Marlantes
Written over the course of 30 years by a highly-decorated Vietnam veteran, this best-selling novel is a spellbinding account of what it is like to be a young man at war. This unforgettable story transforms the tragedy of Vietnam into a powerful and universal story of courage, camaraderie, and sacrifice, providing a parable not only of the war in Vietnam, but of all war.

We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families, Philip Gourevitch '79
What courage must it have required to research and write this book? And who will read such a ghastly chronicle? Gourevitch, who reported from Rwanda for The New Yorker, faces these questions up front: “The best reason I have come up with for looking more closely into Rwanda’s stories is that ignoring them makes me even more uncomfortable about existence and my place in it.”

Economics
For those entering the AP economics sequence:
Naked Economics, Charles Wheelan
This book gives an interesting and non-technical introduction to the economic way of thinking. It examines a variety of macroeconomic, microeconomic, and international economics topics with helpful and occasionally humorous examples.
For those interested in International Economics:
*The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy (Revised Edition),* Pietra Rivoli
A description and analysis of how a t-shirt is produced and the different markets around the world through which the materials, new t-shirts and recycled t-shirts are bought and sold. The book looks at the role of governments in each of these markets.

For those interested in Entrepreneurship:
*Modern Monopolies: What it Takes to Dominate the 21st Century Economy,* Alex Moazed ’06 and Nicholas L. Johnson
The authors articulate how platforms such as Uber, Facebook, Amazon, and Snapchat have transformed the economy and how businesses will need to adapt in order to thrive.

For those interested in Monetary Theory:
*After the Music Stopped: The Financial Crisis, the Response, and the Work Ahead,* Alan S. Blinder
Many fine books on the financial crisis were first drafts of history—books written to fill the need for immediate understanding. Alan S. Blinder—Princeton professor, *Wall Street Journal* columnist, and former vice chairman of the Federal Reserve Board—held off, taking the time to understand the crisis and to think his way through to a truly comprehensive and coherent narrative of how the worst economic crisis in postwar American history happened, what the government did to fight it, and what we can do from here—mired as we still are in its wreckage.

For those interested in the intersection of economics and psychology:
*Thinking Fast and Slow,* by Daniel Kahneman
Winner of a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Kahneman uses psychological research to explain different types of thought processes that affect many areas of our lives, including our financial and investment decisions.

**Religion and Philosophy**

**200 Level:**
*The Tao of Pooh,* Benjamin Hoff
This is a very accessible discussion of the concepts of Taoism.

*Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure,* Sarah Macdonald
This is a woman’s personal account of her life in India and the multitude of religions and religious perspectives she encounters there.

**400 Level:**
*Speaking of Faith,* Krista Tippet
This is Tippet’s reflections on the various figures she has interviewed for her radio show of the same name. The topics range widely and include religious and moral issues and concepts.

*Encountering God: From Bozeman to Banaras,* Diana Eck
The author, who is currently the director of Harvard’s Pluralism Project, reflects on the ways that her own exploration, experience, and study of the religions of India have informed and deepened her own Christian faith. This book both describes an individual journey and makes the case for the importance of inter-religious understanding and dialogue in today’s world.
My Sister’s Keeper, Jodi Picoult
This novel raises a number of compelling moral questions regarding medical ethics, the value of life, and family relationships.

Sophie’s World, Jostein Gaarder
This is a popular book that introduces key questions that philosophy seeks to address. A number of students have read it and recommended it to us.

Political Science
All Levels
How Democratic is the U.S. Constitution?, Robert Dahl
A concise attempt to wrestle with a classic question, packed with lively examples.

All the President’s Men, Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein
Two reporters uncover the greatest presidential scandal of all time.

The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, John J. Mearsheimer
An expert on international politics, Mearsheimer uses his expertise to address the question: Can China rise peacefully?

Psychology
Basic Instinct: The Genesis of Behavior, Mark S. Blumberg
A panicked mother runs through highway traffic to save her wandering child. A green turtle swims hundreds of miles to return to the beach on which it was hatched. Your child utters her first word. Have you ever wondered what causes you to react in a certain way to a certain situation, and if you would react differently under different circumstances? From Charles Darwin to Malcolm Gladwell, writers and scientists have been fascinated by what prompts us to snap decisions. In Basic Instinct, neuroscientist Mark Blumberg provides readers with a logical perspective that does not rely on the clichéd explanations that have become so prevalent among scientists and laypeople alike. The result is an entertaining and balanced examination of the role of genes, experience, and evolution in the construction of behavior.

Make it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning, Peter Brown, et al
A practical book for both students and teachers that explains the science of learning by utilizing cognitive psychology and related fields. Engaging stories illustrate methods for successful learning and challenge many assumptions about how to help students learn and retain knowledge.

Forty Studies That Changed Psychology, Roger R. Hock
This is a must read for those interested in pursuing the study of psychology. These are the studies that are at the heart of the discipline and have been influential in that they have been the inspiration for new and more challenging research. Roger Hock has bridged the gap between the textbooks and the research that made them possible. This book is required reading in many introductory psychology courses. It is divided into the major subject areas of Psychological Inquiry, Brain Function and Structure, Personality, Human Development, Psychological Disorders, and Social Psychology among others.
A User’s Guide to the Brain, John Ratey
New developments in brain research seem to be constantly announced these days, so a competent description of the latest results for the lay reader is always welcome. Ratey, a specialist in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), organizes his material by functional category, development, perception, attention, memory, emotion, language, and socialization.

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, Oliver Sacks
A classic for understanding neuroscience and cognition, this book tells the stories of individuals afflicted with perceptual and intellectual aberrations, recounting them in a sympathetic and deeply human manner. Stories of patients who have exhibited highly unusual symptoms help the reader gain insight into and empathy for the experiences of these individuals.

Thinking Fast and Slow, by Daniel Kahneman
Winner of a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Kahneman uses psychological research to explain different types of thought processes that affect many areas of our lives, including our financial and investment decisions.
Readings in Language

Levels 100-250:
In addition to the English translations in the list below, dual language books, or side-by-side texts, offer the opportunity to read and learn in several different ways.

- If you are a **beginning reader**, you might read the English completely through first and then the foreign text page-by-page as you refer back to the English. At the end you could read the whole text again, but this time without looking at the English.
- An **intermediate student** might start with the page-by-page method and progress to a straight-through reading.
- If you are an **advanced reader**, you might read the foreign language text through first and then go back and read the English to see how the ideas were expressed and then translated.

The idea is not only to comprehend the text, but also to compare how it is expressed in each language and learn vocabulary in the context of whole sentences. This is especially useful for the mastery of idiomatic expressions.

Arabic:
*Jill and the Beanstalk*, Gregory and David Manju
An exciting new version of an old favorite.

Chinese:
*Selected Short Stories of Shen Congwen*, Shen Congwen, Jeffrey Kinkley trans.
Short stories by a modern writer in the 20th century who was known for combining a vernacular style with classical Chinese writing techniques, and whose writing also reflects a strong influence from Western literature.

French:
*French Stories / Contes Français*, Wallace Fowlie, ed. Stories by Voltaire, Camus, Balzac, and Flaubert

Italian:
*Italian Stories / Novelle Italiane*, Robert A. Hall, ed. Stories by Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Bandello, and Verga

Latin:
*Latin Selections*, Moses Hadas and Thomas Suits, eds. Stories by Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca

Spanish:
*Spanish Stories / Cuentos Españoles*, Angel Flores, ed. Stories by Cervantes, Borges, Quiroga, and Unamuno
Levels 300 and Above:
The following texts are written in the target language (with the exception of the suggested readings for Latin, which are in English). Although these texts use relatively common vocabulary and grammatical structures, they should both entertain and challenge intermediate language learners.

Arabic:
*Grandmother and I (Ana wa Jaddati)*, Margo Malatjalian and Mohammad Al-Taher
This book tells the story of a little boy and his relationship with his grandmother. When his mom and dad go to work, he stays with his grandma who looks after him. As he grows older, he begins to take care of her, especially when she falls sick.

*The Prophet (An-Nabi)*, Khalil Gibran
In a distant, timeless place, a mysterious prophet walks the sands. At the moment of his departure, he wishes to offer the people gifts, but he possesses nothing. The people gather round, each asks a question of the heart, and the man’s wisdom is his gift.

Chinese:
*Mu Song*, Long Yingtai
In this book of essays, the author writes about separation: her father’s death, her aging mother, her sons growing up and leaving home, her vulnerability and failures, and about her friends. It is a profound notebook on life and death, on sorrow and beauty.

*Dream of the Red Chamber*, Cao Xueqin - Level 500 and Above
One of the four most well-known Chinese novels, this is a tale of tragedy and love whose plot centers on the romantic relationship between Jia Bao Yu and Lin Dai Yu against the backdrop of Jia’s sudden rise to prosperity and subsequent descent and collapse.

French:
*Journal du dehors*, Annie Ernaux
Piquant anecdotes provide a glimpse into Parisian life through rich and vibrant observations of la vie quotidienne.

*Les enfants de la liberté*, Marc Lévy
A young man learns of his father’s role in the French Resistance during the German Occupation of World War II as part of a young band of “outsiders” of various origins, all sharing the same dream of freedom from oppression.

*Je voudrais que quelqu’un m’attende quelque part*, Anna Gavalda
First-person short stories depict the emotional lives of men and women in and around Paris.

Latin:
*Heroes, Gods, and Monsters of the Greek Myths*, Bernard Evslin
A collection of stories covering the most popular Greek myths, including, for example, Perseus, Zeus, and the Minotaur.
The Iliad, Homer, Robert Fagles trans.
The Iliad is one of the two great epics of Homer, and it is typically described as one of the greatest war stories of all time, but to say the Iliad is a war story does not begin to describe the emotional sweep of its action and characters: Achilles, Helen, Hector, and other heroes of Greek myth and history in the tenth and final year of the Greek siege of Troy.

Fall of the Roman Republic, Plutarch, Rex Warner trans.
Rome’s famed historian illuminates the twilight of the old Roman Republic from 157 to 43 B.C. in succinct accounts of the greatest politicians and statesmen of the classical period.

Spanish:
La Ciudad de las bestias, Isabel Allende
The first book of Allende’s trilogy details the story of Alexander Cold and his friend Nadia Santos, who travel through the Amazon in search of an elusive beast.

El Reino del Dragon de Oro, Isabel Allende
In the second story, Alexander is in the Himalayas with his friend Nadia. They fight American villains, who are trying to kidnap the king and steal a golden dragon from the Forbidden Kingdom.

El bosque de los pigmeos, Isabel Allende
In the final installment, Alexander travels to Kenya to take an elephant safari. There he and his friend Nadia use their supernatural powers to help save the local Bantu and Pygmy tribes.
Readings in Mathematics and Computer Science

Geometry
*Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, Edwin A. Abbott
This science fiction classic describes life in a two-dimensional world and the discovery by one of its inhabitants of a mysterious third dimension.

*Entertaining Mathematical Puzzles*, Martin Gardner
For those who enjoy mathematical puzzles, this short book introduces them by category, from arithmetic puzzles to solid geometry puzzles.

Gowers is a Cambridge mathematician and a Fields medalist who has written an informative book in the Oxford Press series of "Very Short Introductions." According to one reviewer, "a marvelously lucid guide to the beauty and mystery of numbers."

*Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth*, Apostolos Doxiadis and Christos H. Papadimitriou
This graphic novel tells the true story of turn of the 20th century mathematicians’ efforts and eventual failure to bring a consistent logical foundation to the entirety of mathematics. This story, told in an accessible and entertaining manner, also recounts the personal and professional lives of such important intellectual figures as Bertrand Russell and Kurt Godel.

Algebra 2
*Fermat’s Last Theorem: Unlocking the Secret of an Ancient Mathematical Problem*, Amir Aczel
In June of 1993, Andrew Wiles announced that he had proved Fermat’s Last Theorem, a conjecture from the middle of the 17th century. Fermat claimed he had proved it but had no room in the margins of a book he was annotating to record the proof. An extraordinary number of new mathematical concepts and techniques were developed throughout the 19th and 20th century to prove or disprove this conjecture. Aczel tells the story in an engaging manner.

*How to Solve It*, George Polya
This is one of the first books that novice mathematical problem solvers in need of advice typically read. Polya was himself a brilliant problem solver and introduces the reader gently to strategies employed routinely by research mathematicians but rarely by struggling students. Since the 1940s when it was first published, every working mathematician has probably at least skimmed this book.

*Moneyball*, Michael Lewis
How do Oakland A’s, a team with half the payroll of the Yankees, level the playing field in baseball? They hire more mathematicians! Read about this exciting behind-the-scenes revolution in baseball, as one general manager learns to trust the numbers more than baseball’s conventional wisdom.
*Prisoner’s Dilemma*, William Poundstone
This book introduces the reader to Game Theory and the man behind the theory, the mathematical genius John von Neumann. Students interested in economics will find this book appealing.

*Does God Play Dice?: The New Mathematics of Chaos*, Ian Stewart
This popular introduction to the subject of chaotic dynamical systems is one of the best. Stewart uses examples from mathematics, population biology, physics, and the weather to describe the emergence of chaos from order. The reader will learn about strange attractors and fractals and learn a “recipe for chaos.”

**Pre-Calculus and Trigonometry**

*Mathematics: The New Golden Age*, Keith Devlin
Devlin writes lucidly of developments in mathematics that occurred roughly between 1960 and 1990. Although the Four Color Theorem and Fermat’s Last Theorem will be familiar to many readers, the treatments of knot theory, finite simple groups, and algorithmic efficiency will probably be new to most. Devlin, the Math Guy on NPR, is currently Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University.

*The Joy of x: A Guided Tour of Math, from One to Infinity*, Steven Strogatz
Based on his hit *New York Times* series, Strogatz shows the power and beauty of mathematics in a number of practical and interesting applications, from flipping your mattress to increase its lifespan to the number of partners you should date before settling down. Strogatz has a light style that makes this book a pleasure to read.

*A Mathematician’s Apology*, G. H. Hardy
Hardy was among the most brilliant, and certainly most eccentric, British mathematicians of the first half of the 20th century. He is principally remembered today by non-mathematicians for having brought the untutored mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan to Trinity College (Cambridge) from India. Mathematicians remember him for his substantial contributions to analytic number theory and harmonic analysis. Hardy mounts his defense of mathematics eloquently and intelligently. An elegiac note pervades this work, since Hardy was at the end of his career, ill and no longer mathematically creative.

*Makers of Mathematics*, Stuart Hollingdale
This history of mathematics begins with early Greek mathematics and ends with Einstein. Hollingdale focuses on the lives and creative work of mathematicians from Euclid to Poincare. Most of the book can be understood without a background in calculus.

*A Beautiful Math: John Nash, Game Theory, and the Modern Quest for a Code of Nature*, Tom Siegfried
Siegfried guides the reader through game theory and its applications to social networking, evolution, and rational choice theory in economics.

*Evolution of the Social Contract*, Brian Skyrms
Skyrms, an authority on game theory, investigates problems of the social contract from the point of view of evolutionary dynamics. He writes, he says, in the tradition of David Hume and Jean Jacques Rousseau, who explore the question of how the existing implicit social contract evolves.
Statistics

*How Not to Be Wrong: The Power of Mathematical Thinking*, Jordan Ellenberg
Learn about the importance of non-linear thinking, how mathematicians made helped fight the war in World War II, and play the lottery and win. Ellenberg shows the power of mathematics to both clarify and deepen our understanding of the world. A clear description of the thinking that is used in statistics makes this book particularly relevant to students planning on taking statistics. (Dr. Ellenberg was the 2016 Charles Krause ’51 Fellow in Rhetoric at Choate.)

*The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century*, David Salsburg
The 20th century has been referred to by some as the first measured century. This book takes us through the historical development of statistics as a science. It focuses on the application of statistics to manufacturing and social policy, with very little reliance on mathematical equations.

*The Numbers Game: The Commonsense Guide to Understanding Numbers in the News, in Politics and in Life*, Michael Blastland and Andrew Dilnot
The public is inundated with statistical information every day. Political polls, health studies and social issues are described with statistics. What do these numbers mean and how can we avoid being misled?

*The Wisdom of Crowds*, James Surowiecki ’84
We are used to seeking information from the experts, but Choate graduate and New Yorker business columnist James Surowiecki proposes that the group intelligence of a crowd is often more accurate than the experts as long as the following criteria are met. “Wise crowds” need diversity of opinion; independence of members from one another; decentralization; and a good method for aggregating opinions. He cites many interesting examples including maximizing stock market performance, voting for political candidates, designing Internet search engines, etc.

Calculus

*Journey through Genius: The Great Theorems of Mathematics*, William Dunham
Each of the 12 chapters in this engagingly written book treats one of the “great theorems” in mathematics. Dunham discusses the history behind the theorems, their mathematical discoverers, and the creative and often ingenious proofs. The topics range from the Pythagorean Theorem and the infinitude of primes to Newton’s binomial theorem and Cantor’s analysis of the infinite.

*e: The Story of a Number*, Eli Maor
The two most famous real constants in mathematics are π and Euler’s number e. In 15 chapters, Maor shows many other ways that this constant arises naturally in mathematics, from describing the motion of a parachutist to expressing the shape of the gateway arch in St. Louis, Missouri in mathematical terms. The book mixes history, anecdote, and some real mathematics.

*Rise of the Rocket Girls*, Nathalia Holt
If you enjoyed the movie Hidden Figures, you may enjoy this story of other female “human computers” that played essential roles in the space race of the 50’s and 60’s. Learn more about the lives of these women as they navigate space and the fight for equality.
To Infinity and Beyond, Eli Maor
Maor examines the concept of infinity in mathematics, logic, and philosophy. He also illustrates the cultural and artistic impact of these ideas and includes an analysis of some of the images of the graphic artist M.C. Escher.

Computer Science
I, Robot, Issac Asimov
A book that envisioned a future we come nearer and nearer to each day. Enjoy this classic science fiction collection of short stories that launched many a scientist in their quest to understand the nexus between man and machine.

 Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet, Andrew Blum
The Internet touches so much of our lives today. This book gives a behind the scenes look at how and where the Internet works. Sometimes referred to as “the cloud” the Internet is a physical entity of wires, signals, and switches. Understanding this fundamental connector of the modern world will give you a new perspective on every moment you spend on your iPad or iPhone.
Readings in Science

Physics
Intermediate to Advanced:
*A Brief History of Time: The Updated and Expanded Tenth Anniversary Edition*, Stephen Hawking
This is a classic work on cosmology and especially black holes. Very accessible at the beginning, but becomes rather complex near the end. Stephen Hawking wrote *A Brief History of Time* to help nonscientists understand the questions being asked by scientists today: Where did the universe come from? How and why did it begin? Will it come to an end, and if so, how? Hawking attempts to reveal these questions using a minimum of technical jargon. Among the topics covered are gravity, black holes, the Big Bang, the nature of time, and physicists’ search for a grand unifying theory. Modified from Therese Littleton’s review on Amazon.com

*The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory*, Brian Greene
Great explanations about why we need string theory, even though there is still no experimental evidence to support it. There is an ill-concealed skeleton in the closet of physics: “As they are currently formulated, general relativity and quantum mechanics cannot both be right.” Each is exceedingly accurate in its field: general relativity explains the behavior of the universe at large scales, while quantum mechanics describes the behavior of subatomic particles. Yet the theories collide horribly under extreme conditions such as black holes or times close to the big bang. Brian Greene, a specialist in quantum field theory, believes that the two pillars of physics can be reconciled in superstring theory, a theory of everything. Greene gives a tour of string theory solid enough to satisfy the scientifically literate. Modified from Mary Ellen Curtin’s review on Amazon.com

This book tells how a small group of scientists, by studying supernovas, discovered to their surprise that the expansion of the universe is not decelerating but accelerating. Astronomer Kirshner is part of a team studying supernovae that, by their apparent brightness, make it possible to measure distances in the universe. “The observations of distant supernovae show that we live in a universe that is not static as Einstein thought, and not just expanding as Hubble showed, but accelerating! We attribute this increase in expansion over time to a dark energy with an outward-pushing pressure.... Dark energy makes up the missing component of mass-energy that theorists have sought, reconciles the ages of objects with the present expansion rate of the universe, and complements new measurements of the lingering glow of the Big Bang itself to make a neat and surprising picture for the contents of the universe.” Modified from a review by Scientific American.

*QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter*, Richard P. Feynman
This work is doubtless out of date in some details, but it’s a fascinating story of how the field of “quantum electrodynamics” got started. Feynman’s writing is wonderfully lucid and also playful. Celebrated for his brilliantly quirky insights into the physical world, Nobel laureate Richard Feynman also possessed an extraordinary talent for explaining difficult concepts to the general public. Here, Feynman provides a classic and definitive introduction to QED (namely quantum electrodynamics), that part of quantum field theory describing the interactions of light with charged particles. Using everyday language, spatial concepts, visualizations, and his renowned “Feynman diagrams” instead of advanced mathematics, Feynman clearly and humorously communicates both the substance and spirit of QED to the layperson.
Surely You’re Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character), Richard P. Feynman
In this autobiographical series of anecdotes and conversations, Richard recounts sharing ideas on atomic physics with Einstein and Bohr and discusses the process of discovery and learning. Told with a wonderful sense of humor and refreshing honesty, Feynman describes his life-long journey of questioning, challenging, and searching for knowledge.

The Secret Life of Quanta, M. Y. Han
This book introduces the basic concepts of quantum mechanics and how they led to various modern technologies like computers and TVs. There is no mathematics, but the book has a lot of interesting figures, which address the technical issues. Advancing technology in many diverse fields has brought about profound change in every facet of life. The rapid developments in strategic defense and laser research, superconductivity, computers, and telecommunications rivet the attention of millions of individuals reeling from the fast pace of change in the Space Age. Many wonder what it all means, and, more importantly, how these still-mysterious technologies are going to affect our lives. The Secret Life of Quanta conveys, without advanced math, an essential understanding of the physics of atoms and elemental particles, molecular structure, and electromagnetic radiation.

Chemistry
Elementary to Intermediate
The Genie in the Bottle: 67 All-New Commentaries on the Fascinating Chemistry of Everyday Life, Dr. Joe Schwarz
Dr. Schwarz has several interesting stories such as the background of Thalidomide and the origin of the term “snake oil.” About half the book is on food and health-related topics. Looking for a headache cure? Try willow bark. Wondering how that ice cream got its color? Could be from bug juice. Giving us the lowdown on these and other chemical phenomena, The Genie in the Bottle reveals the fun and fascinating secrets collected by popular science writer Dr. Joe Schwarz. Blending quirky chemistry with engaging tales from the history of science, Schwarz offers a different twist on licorice and straight talk on travel to the dark side of the sun, along with the skinny on chocolate research, ginkgo biloba, and blueberries.

Napoleon’s Buttons: How 17 Molecules Changed History, Penny Le Coure and Jay Burreson
This fascinating book tells the stories of 17 molecules that, like the tin of those buttons, greatly influenced the course of history. It is the fascinating account of 17 groups of molecules that have greatly influenced the course of history. These molecules provided the impetus for early exploration, and made possible the voyages of discovery that ensued. The molecules resulted in grand feats of engineering and spurred advances in medicine and law; they determined what we now eat, drink, and wear. A change as small as the position of an atom can lead to enormous alterations in the properties of a substance which, in turn, can result in great historical shifts.

Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood, Oliver Sacks
Sacks, a neurologist known for his books Awakenings and The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, describes his childhood in wartime England and his early scientific fascination with light, matter, and energy. The “Uncle Tungsten” of the book’s title is Sacks’ Uncle Dave, who manufactured light bulbs with filaments of fine tungsten wire, and who first initiated Sacks into the mysteries of metals. The author describes his four years at boarding school during the war, where he was sent to escape the bombings, and his scientific studies. Oliver Sacks’ luminous memoir charts the growth of a mind. Born in 1933 he discovered the wonders of the physical sciences early from his parents and their flock of brilliant siblings, most notably “Uncle Tungsten” (real name, Dave). Seamlessly interwoven with his personal recollections is a masterful survey of scientific history, with emphasis on the great chemists like Robert Boyle, Antoine Lavoisier, and Humphry Davy (Sacks’ personal hero). For young Oliver, unhappy at the brutal boarding school he was sent to during the war, and afraid that he would become mentally ill
like his older brother, chemistry was a refuge in an uncertain world. *Modified from Wendy Smith’s review on Amazon.com*

*The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements*, Sam Kean

The development of the periodic table is a well-known story in chemistry, yet this quirky tour through the table of elements brings a fresh approach with a new set of tales. Mystery, discovery, explosions and more than a few chemistry pranks enliven the writing. Each element has a story, and Kean tells these with the clear prose of a skilled journalist and the pacing and intrigue of a fire-side storyteller. Each element comes alive as these fundamental atoms have a profound impact on the lives of ordinary, and extraordinary, human beings.

**Biology**

**Elementary to Intermediate:**

*The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Jay Gould, Revised and Expanded

Stephen J. Gould critiques the attempts to use biological determinism to justify inequalities between men and women and between so-called biological races. He looks at the use of head measurements, body measurements, and IQ. He includes a specific analysis of *The Bell Curve* by Herrnstein and Murray in this updated edition. Gould’s brilliant, funny, engaging prose dissects the motivations behind those who would judge intelligence, and hence worth, by cranial size, convolutions, or score on extremely narrow tests. How did scientists decide that intelligence was unipolar and quantifiable, and why did the standard keep changing over time? The 20th century obsession with numbers led to the institutionalization of IQ testing and subsequent assignment to work (and rewards) commensurate with the score, shown by Gould to be not simply misguided—for surely intelligence is multifactorial—but also regressive, creating a feedback loop rewarding the rich and powerful. *Modified from Rob Lightner’s review on Amazon.com*

*The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*, Laurie Garrett

This is a 1996 Pulitzer Prize winner on “newly emerging diseases in a world out of balance.” Where’s your next disease coming from? From anywhere in the world—from overflowing sewage in Cairo, from a war zone in Rwanda, from an energy-efficient office building in California, from a pig farm in China or North Carolina. “Preparedness demands understanding,” writes Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Laurie Garrett, and she shows a clear understanding of the patterns lying beneath the new diseases in the headlines (AIDS, Lyme) and the resurgent ones (tuberculosis, cholera). *Adapted from Mary Ellen Curtin’s review on Amazon.com*

*Dr. Tatiana’s Sex Advice to All Creation*, Olivia Judson

This is a very entertaining and highly readable book about evolutionary biology and sexual selection. Written in the format of a sex advice column, it’s really quite funny even as it gets into clear explanations of advanced evolutionary theories and fairly complicated genetics. In this entertaining and informative book, evolutionary biologist Olivia Judson presents “letters” from sexually frustrated animals, birds, and insects who ask “Dr. Tatiana” to explain some sexual oddity. Each question leads Dr. T. into a fascinating explanation about the sex life of this species, sprinkled with sprightly stories about other species with similar attributes or behavior. At the same time she gives clear explanations of advanced evolutionary theories and genetics. *Modified from Joan Price’s review on Amazon.com*
*Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World,* Greg Critser
The title says it all. Critser goes through recent (the 20th century) food history to track the caloric buildup to today’s overweight/obesity epidemic that accounts for many of the current health issues (cardiovascular disease, arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, etc.). Journalist Greg Critser looks beyond the sensational headlines to reveal why nearly 60 percent of Americans are now overweight. Critser investigates the many factors of American life—from supersize to Super Mario, from high-fructose corn syrup to the high cost of physical education in schools—that have converged and conspired to make us some of the fattest people on the planet. He also explains why pediatricians are treating conditions rarely before noticed in children, why Type 2 diabetes is on the rise, and how agribusiness has unwittingly altered the American diet.

*Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters,* Matt Ridley
This is a great book that looks at human DNA chromosomes pair by chromosome pair and tells a story about each of them. Each one is a broad story about something that has been found on that chromosome that relates to genetic development. Each chapter pries one gene out of its chromosome and focuses on its role in our development and adult life, but also goes further, exploring the implications of genetic research and our quickly changing social attitudes toward this information. Readers unfamiliar with the jargon of genetic research needn’t fear; Ridley provides a quick, clear guide to the few words and concepts he must use to translate hard science into English. *Modified from Rob Lightner’s review on Amazon.com*

*Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World,* Tracy Kidder
This book is about Dr. Paul Farmer, a doctor who changes minds and practices through his dedication to the philosophy that “the only real nation is humanity.” At the center of *Mountains Beyond Mountains* stands Dr. Paul Farmer. Farmer was brought up in a bus and on a boat, and in medical school found his life’s calling: to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. This book shows how radical change can be fostered in situations that seem insurmountable, and it also shows how a meaningful life can be created, as Farmer—brilliant, charismatic, charming, both a leader in international health and a doctor who finds time to make house calls in Boston and the mountains of Haiti—blasts through convention to get results.

*The Selfish Gene,* Richard Dawkins
In this classic book, Dawkins takes the viewpoint that we are around simply for the preservation of genes. He discusses how gene selfishness has allowed the continued survival of species with a little bit of altruism thrown in. Richard Dawkins forced an enormous change in the way we see ourselves and the world with the publication of *The Selfish Gene.* Suppose, instead of thinking about organisms using genes to reproduce themselves, as we had since Mendel’s work was rediscovered, we turn it around and imagine that “our” genes build and maintain us in order to make more genes. That simple reversal seems to answer many puzzles that had stumped scientists for years, and we haven’t thought of evolution in the same way since. He also introduced the concept of self-reproducing ideas, or memes, which (seemingly) use humans exclusively for their propagation. *Modified from Rob Lightner’s review on Amazon.com*

*Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers,* Mary Roach
A description of how corpses are used in many different situations—from plane crashes to ballistics. *Stiff* is an exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers—some willingly, some unwittingly—have been involved in science’s boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating, ennobling account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries—from the anatomy labs and...
human-sourced pharmacies of medieval and 19th century Europe to a human decay research facility in Tennessee to a plastic surgery practice lab to a Scandinavian funeral directors’ conference on human composting.

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Rebecca Skloot

In 1951 Henrietta Lacks died from cancer, at the age of 30, but a group of her cells, collected and cultured by a doctor unbeknownst to her, still lives on. In fact, that group of cells, which has been replicated, shared, and spread in petri dishes all around the world (even launched by rocket up into space), is one of the most studied and cloned cell lines in existence. These cells were crucial to research that led to the polio vaccine, have aided discoveries in cancer research, and have also raised numerous scientific and ethical questions. Skloot takes the reader on a journey from the cancer ward in Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1950 to today’s high-tech laboratories and shares the story of the Lacks family, who only much later became aware of the cell culture’s existence. This comprehensible book will challenge the reader to weigh the pros and cons of advances in science as it makes what could be an obscure topic amazingly poignant and human.

*Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare: An Ecologist’s Perspective*, Paul Colinvaux

Colinvaux explains some of the why questions of nature and the surrounding world from the zoologist’s point of view.

**Environmental Science**

**Elementary to Intermediate**

*Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*, Lester R. Brown

This book first describes the current environmental situation and how we got here. It then moves on to describe how we could work to solve the problems. Earth Policy Institute president Brown surveys the worldwide environmental devastation wrought by breakneck industrialization and the heedless, auto-centric, “throwaway economy”: oil and water shortages, pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, collapsing fisheries, mass extinctions, looming famine and pestilence—and he hasn’t even gotten to global warming yet. Fortunately, Brown says, “all the problems we face can be dealt with using existing technologies,” at a manageable cost. He spends most of the book touting advances in sustainable agriculture, wildlife and resource conservation, renewable energy, hyper-efficient cars, mass transit and appliances, and recycling (a waterless, composting toilet that produces “essentially odorless” humus, for instance). Brown wants to reform and humanize, not abolish, industrial modernity, and keeps the focus on practical, tested measures. *Modified from a review by Reed Business Information.*

*Our Stolen Future: Are We Threatening Our Fertility, Intelligence, and Survival? A Scientific Detective Story*, Theo Colborn, Diane Dumanoski, and John Peter Meyers

In this book, the authors examine the links between endocrine disrupting chemicals and decreased sperm counts, male animals with female sexual characteristics, and cancers in males and females. Endocrine disrupting chemicals alter development of the fetus in the womb by interfering with the natural hormonal signals directing fetal growth. Their impacts, sometimes not detectable until years or decades after exposure, include reduced disease resistance, diminished fertility and compromised intelligence and behavior. Our Stolen Future tells the story of how endocrine disruption was discovered, how it works what it means, and how families can protect themselves and their communities, all in clear, simple language intended for a general audience. *Review from OurStolenFuture.org*
Living Downstream: An Ecologist Looks at Cancer and the Environment, Sandra Steingraber
In this book, Sandra Steingraber examines correlations between chemicals in our environment and cancer rates. A precise delineation of the ugly marriage between synthetic chemicals in the environment and rising cancer rates, from biologist Steingraber. Steingraber tracks the distribution of cancer across space, and charts its trajectory through time, in an effort to pick up clues about origins and causes. Everywhere she looks are chemicals: benzene and chlordane, heptachlor and dieldrin, you name it—all have been linked to various cancers, all found heavy use in the postwar period (as herbicides and solvents, pesticides and fuel), when it was believed that chemicals would set humans free. Modified from a review by Kirkus Reviews

Breakfast of Biodiversity: The Political Ecology of Rain Forest Destruction, John Vandermeer and Ivette Perfecto
The authors examine the “web of causality” that leads to rain forest destruction in this book. They include the traditional topics of rain forest stability and the quality of rain forest soils; however, they also include international agricultural economics, economic theory, land tenure and many other strands in the web. Vandermeer and Ivette Perfecto insightfully describe the ways in which such disparate factors as the international banking system, modern agricultural techniques, rain forest ecology, and the struggles of the poor interact to bring down the forest. They weave an alternative vision in which democracy, sustainable agriculture, and land security for the poor are at the center of the movement to save the tropical environment. This new, fully updated edition of Breakfast of Biodiversity discusses important new developments in our understanding of rain forest biology and assesses the impacts of a decade of “free” trade on the rain forest and on those who live in and around it.

Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England, Tom Wessels
This book offers a new and integrated way of looking at the landscape around us (specifically central New England), and the stories that the land tells. It brings common sense and an understanding of local history to a view of “nature” that can change the way you look at the land around you forever. Etched into the land is the history of how we have inhabited it, the storms and fires that have shaped it, and its response to these and other changes. Wessels teaches us to read a landscape the way we might solve a mystery. What exactly is the meaning of all those stone walls in the middle of the forest? Why do beech and birch trees have smooth bark when the bark of all other northern species is rough? How do you tell the age of a beaver pond and determine if beavers still live there? Why are pine trees dominant in one patch of forest and maples in another? What happened to the American chestnut? Turn to this book and no walk in the woods will ever be the same.

Oil and Honey: The Education of an Unlikely Activist, Bill McKibben
Environmental author (The End of Nature) Bill McKibben has been writing about climate change for 25 years, but when he thought that not enough was being done, he founded the global organization 350.org and organized numerous public protests against the Keystone XL pipeline and the oil companies that have pumped so much money and propaganda into the debate on global warming. He writes about our global addiction to carbon fuels, his own evolution as an activist, and offers some visions for hope and change for the future. A very accessible entry into some of the politics behind climate change, this book shows what can happen with groups of ordinary citizens band together and make their voices heard.

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History, Elizabeth Kolbert
Pulitzer Prize-winner Kolbert, a staff writer at The New Yorker, casts a scientific eye on the expansion of homo sapiens over the earth, noting that the arrival of humans has coincided with the extinction of many other large animal species (megafauna). Kolbert notes that these extinctions continue to the present day, and may be accelerating. The loss of biodiversity on our planet seems to be happening more quickly than at any point in the
history of the earth, including the five major extinction events that wiped out the dinosaurs and other large groups of animals and plants. This thoroughly researched and beautifully written work pulls together multiple threads to tell a very disturbing story about disappearing species on our planet.

General Science
Elementary:
A Short History of Nearly Everything, Bill Bryson
Bryson does a great job of presenting everything from atomic physics, the origins of the universe, to human evolution in an up-to-date and relatively thorough and humorous way. This is especially good for the curious person who has not delved too deeply into all of these areas. From primordial nothingness to this very moment, A Short History of Nearly Everything reports what happened and how humans figured it out. To accomplish this daunting literary task, Bryson uses hundreds of sources, from popular science books to interviews with luminaries in various fields. His aim is to help people like him, who rejected stale school textbooks and dry explanations, to appreciate how we have used science to understand the smallest particles and the unimaginably vast expanses of space. Modified from Therese Littleton's review on Amazon.com.
Readings for Students at the Kohler Environmental Center

Required Texts

*Encounters with the Archdruid*, John McPhee
The narratives in this book are of journeys made in three wildernesses—on a coastal island, in a Western mountain range, and on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. The four men portrayed here have different relationships to their environment, and they encounter each other on mountain trails, in forests and rapids, sometimes with reserve, sometimes with friendliness, sometimes fighting hard across a philosophical divide.

*Twelve by Twelve: A One-Room Cabin Off the Grid and Beyond the American Dream*, William Powers

*The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*, Michael Pollan
“What should we have for dinner?” Anthropologists call this question the omnivore’s dilemma. Choosing from among the countless potential foods nature offers, humans have had to learn what is safe and what isn’t. Today, the cornucopia of the modern American supermarket and fast-food outlet has thrown us back on a bewildering landscape where we once again have to worry about which of those tasty-looking morsels might kill us.

*Students attending the KEC must also read the all-school required summer reading for English: The Book of Unknown Americans by Christina Henriquez.*
Readings in Lifelong Wellness

Note: Students are encouraged to invite friends and family members to read and discuss these titles with them.

*Masterminds and Wingmen*, Rosalind Wiseman
Explores adolescent boys and the forces that are strongest during their adolescent years with a view toward understanding the challenges of young people who identify as boys.

*Positivity*, Barbara Fredrickson
Learn why positivity is more important than happiness and how it can enhance relationships, work, and health, and how it broadens the mind.

*Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in the Digital Age*, Sherry Turkle
Examines how much we lose when communicating through technology and avoiding face-to-face conversations; also discusses solitude and self-reflection and what technology is good and not so good for.

*The Transgender Teen: A Handbook for Parents and Professionals Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Teens*, Stephanie Brill
A guidebook for exploring the unique challenges of raising a teenagers who may be transgender, non-binary, gender fluid or otherwise gender expansive.

*Untangling: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood*, Lisa Damour
A resource for parents raising daughters, explains how teens think and what behaviors are to be expected, with a view toward understanding the challenges of young people who identify as girls.

*Where You Go is Not Who You’ll Be*, Frank Bruni
Gives parents and students a new and informed perspective on the college admissions process and provides tips for dealing with the anxiety and self-doubt that it often provokes.